MASTERS OF THE GAME

Host
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Winners of the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences Interactive Achievement Awards for excellence in: art direction, animation, game play engineering, visual engineering, sound design, musical composition, and character and story development.

Hosted by J.C Herz of Joystick Nation Inc., with an introduction from the president of the academy, Paul Provenzano, Masters of the Game offers a behind-the-scenes look at some of the world's leading games and the people who created them. The award winners will speak about the games, their sources of inspiration, their multi-disciplinary teams, and how they created the magic for which they won the AIAS Interactive Achievement Award.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN
SOUND DESIGN AND MUSICAL COMPOSITION
Medal of Honor: Underground (PlayStation)
DreamWorks Interactive/Electronic Arts

Lead Manon from her beginnings in the resistance through her recruitment by the OSS to thwart the German onslaught. Armed with an arsenal of new weapons, you battle tanks, half-tracks, and Gestapo thugs across Europe and North Africa. From the cobblestone streets of Paris to the narrow alleyways of Casablanca, from a doomed Italian monastery to Himmler's dark medieval castle in Germany, you undertake challenging missions to outwit and outgun fierce enemy troops. Procured weapons, expert stealth, and a poised trigger finger – you'll need them all to become a seasoned veteran of the OSS and return home to take part in the liberation of your homeland.

Speakers
ERIK KRABER, JACK GRILLO, MICHAEL GIACCHINO

Erik Kraber, Jack Grillo
Erik Kraber and Jack Grillo are the lead sound designers for DreamWorks Interactive. Their work on the Medal of Honor series and Clive Barker's Undying has resulted in many accolades, including two AIAS Craft awards for Best Sound Design of the Year. They both began their careers designing sound for films and commercials before joining DreamWorks Interactive.

Michael Giacchino
In early 1997, Michael Giacchino was approached by the newly formed DreamWorks Interactive to score their flagship PlayStation video game based on Steven Spielberg's summer box office phenomenon, "The Lost World." The result was the world's first ever completely original orchestral score written for a PlayStation console. Since then, he has composed six additional orchestral scores for DreamWorks Interactive. Last summer, he recorded his score for Medal of Honor: Underground, which garnered him the AIAS craft award for best achievement in musical composition, and in March of this year, he began composing the music for the next chapter in the DreamWorks Interactive Medal of Honor series, which goes before the orchestra in June.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN
VISUAL ENGINEERING AND GAME PLAY ENGINEERING
SSX: Snowboarding Super Cross (PlayStation 2)
Electronic Arts/Electronic Arts

Explode out of the gate and launch into the race of your life. Push the boundaries of real physics to dominate the SSX World Circuit. This high-speed arcade racer revolutionizes snowboarding games by taking the sport and tricks of today onto the tracks of tomorrow. Enter mind-blowing worlds with spectacular tracks, while listening to break-beat music that mixes on the fly. Experience full-contact survival-mode racing that keeps you riding the edge between control and chaos.

Speaker
MIKE RAYNER, ELECTRONIC ARTS

Mike Rayner has been an active member of the game development community since 1994. He holds both a bachelors of engineering and a bachelors of science from the University of Western Ontario. After distinguishing himself in the R&D group at Gray Matter, he joined Electronic Arts in October 1997. Previously the lead rendering programmer on SSX, he is currently lead platform engineer on the upcoming sequel.

His game credits include: Foes of Ali Boxing (3DO), Perfect Weapon (PSX+PC), The Crow City of Angels (PSX+PC), Manic Marbles (PC), The Condemned (PC), Triple Play 1999 (PSX+PC), Triple Play 2000 (PSX+PC), and SSX (PS2).

Screen Shot from SSX: Snowboarding Super Cross.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN GAME DESIGN
Zelda: Majora's Mask (Nintendo 64)
Nintendo Co. Ltd./Nintendo of America

Thrown into a parallel world by the mischievous actions of a possessed Skull Kid, Link found a land that was in grave danger. The dark power of a relic called Majora's Mask had wreaked havoc on the citizens of Hyrule, but their most urgent problem was a suicidal moon crashing toward the world. Link had only 72 hours to find a way to stop its descent, so he traveled through time and worked ceaselessly until he accomplished his goal.

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Speaker
KEN LOBB, NINTENDO OF AMERICA INC.

Ken Lobb is director of game evaluation and marketing support for Nintendo of America. Over the years, he has designed and produced games such as Low-G-Man and G.I. Joe for the NES; Rolling Thunder 2, Splatterhouse 3, and Wings 2 for Genesis and Super NES; Killer Instinct, Tetrisphere, Goldeneye, Perfect Dark, and Conker's Bad Fur Day for the arcade and Nintendo 64. Prior to joining Nintendo in 1993, he worked as a product manager for Namco Hometek and Taxan USA and as a product/test Engineer for AMD and Waferscale Integration, Inc. Currently, he is working on projects for the Nintendo GameCube and still loves his job and hobby.

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN
CHARACTER OR STORY DEVELOPMENT
Baldur's Gate II (PC)
Interplay Entertainment, BioWare Corp.

Every world has conflict. Good and evil. Friend and foe. Safety and danger. In Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn, you find yourself between these factions. This epic sequel immerses you in a world of intrigue, adventure, and fierce combat, where your ability to discern the difference between these sides (with the assistance of steel and spell) determines your fate.

In Baldur's Gate I, you defeated your evil half-brother, Sarevok, and prevented your father, Bhaal, the dead Lord of Murder, from returning to the Forgotten Realms. Now, in Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn, the stakes have become much higher. Will you resist the evil within you and forge a legend of heroic proportions? Or will you embrace your monstrous inner nature, and carve a swath of destruction across the realms?

Your story begins anew in the exotic southern kingdom of Amn, amidst the opulence of the sinister capital city of Athkatla. Journey through the fierce, unforgiving wilderness of Amn and the treacherous caverns of the Underdark in your quest for artifacts of awesome power and treasure of inestimable wealth. Even challenge dragons, if you dare. Such is the life of a legend.

Speaker
DAVID HIBBELN, DIRECTOR OF ART, BIOWARE CORP.

Ever since he was a wee lad, David Hibbeln loved to draw, play computer games, and play Dungeons & Dragons, but never dreamed it could be made into a career. As a somewhat older lad, he went to the University of Alberta and graduated with a BA in linguistics and a minor in English. It was there that he learned the finer points of written and oral communication, but his love and passion for art drove him to pursue visual communication. His interest in comic art prompted him to try self-publishing comics. He also did some freelance graphic design work before he was drawn to the beauty and emotion of animation as a visual communication medium. His love of animation and film prompted him to take as many courses and read as many books on animation as he could find.

His first animation work was as assistant animator on a National Film Board of Canada short animation called "Cactus Swing," at Salamander Studios in Edmonton. After that film was complete, he had an opportunity to learn computer animation at a local company. From there, the rare opportunity came to join a new computer-games company: BioWare Corp. He saw this as an opportunity to bring better animation to computer games. As BioWare grew, he formed an animation department at BioWare to specifically meet the challenges of all things moving in a game. Currently, he is director of art for BioWare, where he manages a growing pool of 35 artists. He is also still involved in production, directing the cinematic elements and advising on in-game animation.

Paul Provenzano
Paul Provenzano is president and executive director of the Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences, the professional academy of the $6.1+ billion interactive entertainment software industry. He is a 10-year veteran in interactive entertainment with 18 years overall in the entertainment industry.

J.C. Herz
One of the most useful tools for understanding the relationship between game and story is the concept of dimensionality. A cube, for instance, is a 3D object Reducing its dimensionality yields a square (2D), a line (1D), and finally a point. Reducing the dimensionality of a film yields a still frame. Reducing the dimensionality of urban planning gives you architecture. Reducing the dimensionality of a game, by eliminating all but one of the possible trajectories through the world, yields a story.

Essentially, the story is a core sample of the game, one trajectory through the universe of all possible solutions. Outside the system, that story might be dramatic or undramatic, just as the game itself might be satisfying or unsatisfying. Dimensionality is not a good in and of itself. But the challenge for game designers, as storytellers, is to build a world that's interesting in multiple dimensions: the individual's trajectory through the world, the game as a whole (an overall sense of "gameplay" and dynamics), and the social experience that happens around the game (for example, trading custom skins or levels, fan sites, etc.). Creating a satisfying experience is a more complex task in many dimensions than in fewer dimensions. Herein lies the challenge, for game designers and storytellers alike, as media evolve into more sophisticated, multilayered forms.